

7.3.2.3

MAILNET

MAILNET originated as a joint project of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), EDUCOM, and fifteen pioneer sites, with some initial funding from the Carnegie Foundation. Unfortunately, the network vanished by the end of 1986 due to a lack of funds. *MAILNET* was an inexpensive mail network connecting heterogeneous computer systems at academic institutions. It was run by EDUCOM and was a star network around a Multics machine at MIT, *MIT-MULTICS*. That machine ceased operation on 2 January 1988. Institutions with *MAILNET* hosts were charged an installation fee (\$2,100) and a monthly service fee (\$190), plus usage charges based on the number and length of messages sent each month. Eighty percent of all *MAILNET* messages cost less than 20 cents. Monthly traffic averaged just over 12,000 messages from 1,800 users. There were about 30 hosts in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Most mail transfers were done by telephone dialup from the central mail relay machine, though *Telenet* or *TYMNET* could also be used. An early version of *CSNET*'s **MMDF** software was used to coordinate the calls, and the *ARPANET* SMTP protocol was used for addressing and transferring messages in RFC822 format. The only hardware required was a modem. Speed depended on the underlying transfer mechanism, but hosts were polled at least twice a day. Reliability was high.

Interconnections

The old-style *ARPANET* syntax (e.g., *user@host*) was used. Gateways existed to the *Internet*, *BITNET*, *CSNET*, and *JANET*. But since *MAILNET* doesn't exist anymore, there's no way to get to or from it.